

21 Walker Fairbairn (d 1935), Maurice Fairbairn (d 1917) and William Walker Fairbairn (d 1905)

There are two significant memorials to Fairbairns in the Cemetery, very close together. One has the following:



In loving memory
of
MAURICE
SECOND LIEUTENANT
11TH BATT. K.O.R.L. REG^T
ELDER SON OF
WILLIAM WALKER
AND
ELIZA FAIRBAIRN
WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION
IN FRANCE JULY 7TH 1917
AGED 23 YEARS
ALSO OF **HILDA**
THEIR BELOVED DAUGHTER
DIED NOV^R 9TH 1918
AGED 21 YEARS

In loving memory
of
**WILLIAM WALKER
FAIRBAIRN**
WHO ENTERED INTO
REST 4TH APRIL 1905
AGED 43 YEARS.
"FATHER IN THY GRACIOUS
KEEPING,
LEAVE ME NOW THY SERVANT
SLEEPING."

ALSO OF **ELIZA**
HIS BELOVED WIFE
WHO ENTERED INTO
REST 26TH JUNE 1949
AGED 81 YEARS

The second grave commemorates Walker Fairbairn, and reads:

IN MEMORY OF
WALKER FAIRBAIRN O.B.E., J.P.
BELOVED HUSBAND OF EMMA FAIRBAIRN
BORN 20TH NOVEMBER 1868,
DIED 18TH DECEMBER 1935
"I WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE LORD."
ERECTED BY HIS FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS
IN RECOGNITION OF HIS LONG AND SELF-
SACRIFICING PUBLIC SERVICE.
MAYOR OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS
1921-1924
ALSO THE ABOVE
EMMA FAIRBAIRN
BORN 5TH JULY 1868
DIED 24TH FEBRUARY 1947



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John Hutton's book *Kitchener's Men*² reports: "In the early hours of 7 July, tragedy struck. Three officers of C Company were killed when a shell scored a direct hit on the shelter in which they were sleeping. One of these officers was from Barrow: Second Lieutenant Maurice Fairbairn. ...was the son of the late William Walker Fairbairn, a sculptor who lived in Rawlinson Street, Barrow. Maurice had joined the Army in 1916 and went out to France with the Artists Rifles as a private soldier. When he took a commission he joined the King's Own in early 1917. Prior to the war, he had worked in the local office of accountants W. B. Peat and Co.

The *Barrow News* 15 February 1936 recorded

PROPOSED MEMORIAL AT BARROW TO THE LATE MR. WALKER FAIRBAIRN, O.B.E., J.P. RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

A representative meeting was held at the Town Hall, Barrow, on Friday, under the chairmanship of the Mayor (Ald. Bram. Longstaffe, J.P.) for the purpose of considering the question of erecting a suitable memorial to the late Mr. Walker Fairbairn, O.B.E., J.P., who so worthily served the town in a civic capacity for a large number of years, including the period 1921-24 during which he held the position of Mayor.

In addition to the ladies and gentlemen present, apologies were received from others who were unavoidably absent, but who promised their cordial co-operation in any scheme adopted.

It was decided to issue collection books and to acknowledge subscriptions in the public Press.

Any sympathisers who have not been already approached and who are willing to assist should make application to the secretary or treasurer at the Town Hall.

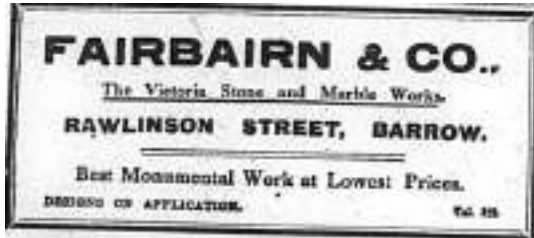
¹ <http://www.dockmuseum.org/detail.php?t=objects&type=browse&f=CATEGORY1&s=VISUAL+WORKS&record=331>

² Pen & Sword 2008 p 219

The Mayor was appointed chairman of the Committee, who were given power to co-opt any additional members; Mr. J. C. Styles, Borough Treasurer, was appointed hon. treasurer, and Mr. J. McLelland, hon. secretary.

William and Eliza (Andrews) married in 1893 in Barrow, and had 7 children: Maurice born 1894; Sydney 1895; Hilda 1897; Mabel 1899; Winifred 1900 [d 1900]; Elsie 1901 and Millicent 1903.³

William's younger brother(?) Walker married Emma Kerr in Barrow in 1894. They had Marjorie (1896); Thomas Arthur (1897); Winifred (1902), and Walter Charles (1903). Winifred married William Gawthrop, and died at Calcutta in 1941.



The family business of some of the Fairbairns was as monumental stonemasons, and the advert (left) appeared many times in the *Barrow News*, this one being from 8 October 1914.

William Walker Fairbairn's death and funeral were reported in the *Barrow News* 8 April 1905, but the ink on the microfilm is so faint that it is impossible to read. It begins however "It is with deep regret that we have to announce the death of Mr. W. W. Fairbairn, of Fairfield Villa, Barrow, which took place on Tuesday morning, at four o'clock ... *becomes unreadable*".

The *Barrow News* 21 December 1935 is much more readable,

FORMER MAYORS' PASSING

Barrow has lost a highly respected citizen by the passing of ex-Alderman Walker Fairbairn, who was a member of the Town Council from 17 May, 1909, to 5 September, 1927, and was made an Alderman on 4 July 1921, in which year he was also elected Mayor, and held office for three years. The late Mr. Fairbairn became Chief Citizen at a time when the town was suffering from depression in trade. It was the lean time in shipbuilding that followed the Washington conference, and the number of employes⁴ (*sic*) at the Shipyard got down to less than 4,000. At that time some 10,000 men were idle in the town, and the depression continued, more or less acute during Mr. Fairbairn's three years' Mayoralty.

It will be recalled that about that time the late Mr. Fairbairn approached the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the Lord Mayors of Newcastle and Sheffield, and the Mayors of Birkenhead, Wallsend and Jarrow, and invited them to join with him in making overtures to the Government to provide alternative work for those who had been the chief sufferers from the stoppage of naval construction work. By his initiative the position was placed before the Government and eventually work did come to Barrow, due, no doubt, in some measure to the efforts of the Mayor of that period who was a frequent visitor to Whitehall in the interests of the town. For the public services rendered to Barrow Mr. Fairbairn was made an O.B.E. in the 1934 New Year's honours list.

Elsewhere in the same edition we can learn more of his life:

Thrice mayor of Barrow

We deeply regret to chronicle the death of ex-Alderman Walker Fairbairn, J.P., O.B.E., which took place at his home in Mikasa-street, Walney Island, on Wednesday morning, at the age of 67 years.

The deceased gentleman had been in failing health for the last two years and during the last seven weeks had been confined to bed.

..... Born in Kirkoswald, Cumberland, the late Mr. Fairbairn came to Barrow at the age of 13. When 16 years of age he entered the employ of Messrs. Charles Bros., wholesale grocers and provision merchants. In 1903 he embarked upon an enterprise of his own, and for many years carried on business as a grocer and baker in Earl-street, Barrow Island, and also as a grocer in Cavendish-street. He was also chairman of Osborne's, Ltd., bakers and caterers, Barrow Island, and for a few years had a grocery establishment in Kendal. Owing to failing health he retired from business a few years ago. ... He was also a director of the Furness and South Cumberland Building Society.

.... Sympathy will also be extended to the deceased's two sons and two daughters, one of whom in India (*and commemorated in the body of the grave.*)

A full account of the funeral appeared in the *Barrow News* 28 December 1935.

³ Cumbria BMD

⁴ This was how it was spelt at the time.